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THE MEDIA ENERGY DISCOURSE AS AN OBJECT OF SOCIOLOGICAL REFLECTION — THE THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Is energy a sociological topic?

Questions concerning acquisition, storage and use of energy crop up in diverse contexts associated with how societies operate at various levels: from micro (household and individuals' practices), via meso (when energy issues are considered in the context of the functioning of cities, municipalities or regions), to macro (referring to state policies, the workings of transnational organisations, and global markets and geopolitical systems). We can also identify the global level, when the operation of the energy industries is discussed in the context of the future of the planet, climate, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and responsible management of resources on a global scale. Energy policy as a type of public policy is generating increased interest among diverse social actors, coinciding with calls for civic empowerment and participatory development of these policies.[1] These demands

1 With reference to the five stages of the process of managing public policies (Jann, Wegrich 2007; cf. Palumbo, Maynard-Moody 1991; Dye 2013; Górniak, Żmuda, Prokopowicz 2015), the process of civic deliberation is usually applied in the first stage, i.e. "agenda setting," or paying attention to a given issue requiring state intervention, and the third one, acquiring legitimation for specific proposals for action. This fits into the Habermasian conception of dialogue between the authorities and society, in which the civil society is a space for forming demands and the political system is supposed to respond to them (cf. Habermas 1992; Hess 2013). Yet public deliberation in the sense of procedures of governance can also play an

are associated with a growing popularity of the concepts of deliberative and participatory democracy (Habermas 1996; Dryzek 1990, 2000, 2010; Fishkin, Laslett 2003), and involve consideration of the reflexive public opinion (Fishkin 2009) and civic engagement, for example in the concept of "multilane governance" (Sroka 2009). They are gaining in importance as the needs for transformations of the current energy systems are expressed increasingly clearly in transnational (scientific, political, economic) discourses. These transformations would aim to find new, innovative solutions to allow humanity to respond to the increasing energy requirements of contemporary civilisations, as well as responding to threats related to climate, the environment and limited supplies of fossil fuels. Social protests are no longer interpreted solely in terms of a lack of knowledge or irrational fears of technology (Stankiewicz 2009) and the NIMBY ("Not in my back yard") syndrome, too frequently reduced to people's egoistic aversion to investments (which they otherwise view as justified) being realised in their neighbourhood (Wolsink 2006; Devine-Wright 2009b). Instead, they are increasingly regarded as a dramatic voice in the public sphere resulting from exclusion or marginalisation of some actors[2] (cf. Bell, Grey, Haggett 2005). Some argue that the industrial revolution and its model of energy culture[3] founded on coal, oil and gas created an era of modernisation whose potential in its original form is coming to its limit (Giddens, Lash, Beck 1994). The world is in need of a new paradigm, as illustrated by changes in the organisation of the global economy, lifestyle patterns, values and objectives and the corresponding narratives of crisis: of democracy, capitalism, finances, family, religion, migration etc. A need is emerging to define a new energy basis for further civilisational growth. Among those today writing of a new order with a key role for change in energy policies in the world economy are Jeremy Rifkin (2013), Nico Stehr (2015) and John Urry (2014). Also important is the perception of knowledge as social constructs generated according to new models beyond the university or research laboratory (Gross 2015) and of ignorance that is sometimes no simple gap of knowledge, but rather also a social construct that is an additional source of uncertainty and risk (Fischer, Gottweis 2012; Gross 2015), and frequently a resource employed strategically (McGoey 2012).

With all this in mind, social scientists' growing interest in energy issues in recent decades comes as no surprise. This interest is linked to a comprehensive understanding of energy systems as socio-technological wholes,

important role in the remaining stages – i.e. developing specific policies, making decisions and implementing them – on condition that the administrative/technocratic model of public policy administration is done away with in favour of a participatory model (cf. also the argumentative model of public policy analysis [Majone 1989]).

2 A separate issue is that of self-exclusion, which has a cultural basis (cf. Sroka 2009).

3 We understand the concept of energy culture following Łucki, Misiak (2011).

and therefore not only in categories of natural resources (what can we use?) and technologies (how can we use it?), but rather as cultural and individual models of defining the social practices, values and norms that regulate them (Stirling 2014). With this comes the belief that "since the domestication of fire, energy revolutions and cultural shifts have stood in a relationship of mutual interdependency" (Sarrica et al. 2015). It remains a challenge how to overcome the dichotomy between the technological and human aspects of energy, and further, between their social and individual dimensions (Sarrica et al. 2015; Bergmans et al. 2014). The discourses emerging in energy issues conceptualise the problems, challenges and solutions. They organise the symbolic resources both for creating new, innovative paths of development and for consolidating the status quo and preserving the existing balance of power and cultural models. They are a space for forming coalitions and oppositions, and legitimise and delegitimise competing values and visions. They constitute a space for defining social situations, and therefore – if we consider the accepted definitions to be dispositions for these actions to work or be abandoned – forming the future of humanity. This is also the area in which we define the undefined, generate and negotiate ways of dealing with the unknown, and discuss strategies for acting in the face of risk and uncertainty. It is therefore impossible to analyse or plan energy transformations in isolation from the accompanying discourses, as it is they that are the product of this, but at the same time comprise a metanarrative focusing the attention of the existing epistemic communities (Fischer, Gottweis 2012; Cotton, Rattle, Alstine 2014) on the issues of change.

Something that remains a separate issue is the visibility of these discourses in the public sphere – where social problems are determined and the public policies in response to them are legitimised. Among the most important spaces of this visibility is media communication (Dobek-Ostrowska 2007; Hess 2013; Adut 2012). This means both the mass media, i.e. television, radio and press, and the internet space. In the latter, despite the lower entry barriers for social actors, as well as what would appear to be unlimited possibilities of articulation, visibility remains a pressing, and even crucial problem. Some critically oriented researchers of the internet, working from an optimistic and normative vision of the virtual space that emphasises equality and freedom, highlight the dominant position of global corporations and their influence on the access to contents offered to users (cf. Juza 2016; Fuchs 2014). Mediatised discourses on public policies – in this case energy policy – are therefore irrevocably linked to the working of social life in all its aspects: power, violence, knowledge and ignorance, competition, ideologies, interests, statuses, inequalities, etc.

The empowerment of citizens advanced in theories of democracy involves their participation in decision processes and treats the media as an important

source of knowledge about the world. It also demands the ability to critically analyse the discourses that are taking place and to discern their constructivist nature. Awareness of discursive mechanisms supports transparency of the public sphere and increases the chances for it to be open to new actors and alternative arguments. This is one of the most important tasks of discursive analyses of public policies.

Social scientists in Poland are only just starting to become interested in energy issues. Whereas for years economic aspects and questions of legislation, and more recently energy security from a political science perspective, have been the subject of research and analyses, thus far it has been rare to take a sociological approach. One of the few attempts to outline the field of interests of sociology of energy is Łucki and Misiak's important monograph *Energetyka a społeczeństwo* (*Energy and Society*, Łucki, Misiak 2011). Numerous public opinion polls on subjects related to the issues of energy policy often boil down to discussing the support, or lack thereof, for a given investment project. These tend to be more journalistic and political than scientific. Against this background, Piotr Stankiewicz and Aleksandra Lis's (2012) sociological study on the knowledge, attitudes and interest of Poles about nuclear energy, as well as the monograph *Social Science and Energy Issues* edited by Sylwia Mrozowska (2016), stand out. Further, separate attention is merited by books on aspects of civic participation and decision processes referring to various problems of energy – from the perception and evaluation of new technologies (Stankiewicz 2008), to the creation of conditions for participation (Stankiewicz 2013; Stankiewicz, Stasik, Suchomska 2015). Both Polish and international authors explore Polish discourses on energy issues (Wagner, Grobelski, Harembski 2016; Upham et al. 2015; Jaspal, Nerlich, Lemańczyk 2014; Wagner 2014; Świątkiewcz-Mośny, Wagner 2012; Mrozowska, Kijowska 2016).

It would also appear that a large section of society do not pay attention to energy policy issues. Less than 18% declare that they follow such topics in the media, while 66.5% admit to a lack of interest in such contents (TNS OBOP 2015). Opinion polls on shale gas illustrate the knowledge deficit among Poles, especially regarding threats (CBOS 2013, 2011), although the respondents themselves describe their knowledge of shale gas as sufficient. They also sometimes fail to discern a need for knowledge even on such practical issues as the level of electricity bills (25% do not know how much they pay, and do not view this knowledge as necessary – TNS OBOP 2015). Energy issues are often presented in the media in a very abstract fashion, conceptualised at the macro level of social life; this means that media communications operate between systems (e.g. mediatised information exchange between economic and political institutions), rather than taking place between the authorities and citizens (cf. Świątkiewicz-Mośny, Wagner 2012). As a result, citizens tend to become spectators in

a show that presents specific directions of energy policy, rather than direct or even actually represented participants. Therefore, the visibility of problems and discussions in the media is fundamental to the formation of the social agenda, which then becomes a reference point for systems generating certain solutions within the public policy.

A discursive approach to analysis of public policies. Deliberation and visibility in the public sphere

The objective of the research presented in this book was to answer the question of the deliberative potential of the Polish information media. We understand deliberation as collective consideration on matters of importance to a given community (Fishkin 2009). By differentiating deliberation from the concept of civic participation, understood as active participation of citizens in the processes of making political decisions, we also refer to the meaning of deliberation as dialogical exchange and development of arguments. We accept normative assumptions on the exchange of arguments by the participants in deliberation, their readiness to change opinion, capacity to refer to the arguments of others and to produce criteria for judging which of these arguments to further develop. In referring to conceptions of deliberative decision making, acknowledging its influence and significance for contemporary theories of democracy and appreciating the forms of direct democracy, we also observe an underestimation in the subject literature of the potential of mediatisation of deliberation and the significance of media activity for the operation of this process in the public sphere.[4]

By defining the public sphere through its communicative dimension (cf. Ferree et al. 2002), we therefore wish to reflect critically on whether the information media support social deliberation, both by creating a space for debate and by informing citizens on the processes of dialogue taking place and mobilising them to take active part in then. The essential questions here are: who participates in the debate in the information media; what events

4 Numerous authors discuss (often critically) the issue of the role of media in deliberation processes, including Ben Page (1996), Simone Chambers and Anne N. Costain (2000), Maarten Wolsink (2006), along with many articles to which we refer in this book. In most works, however, the authors ask about the role of the media (their practices, media representations, etc.) in deliberation processes. Conceptualisation of the media as a space where a process of deliberation can occur (present, for example, in Hess 2013) is a rarity in the subject literature.

and topics determine its dynamic; what values and principles organise the discourses that exist in the media space; how do these discourses reflect specific epistemic communities and how do these communities create coalitions and oppositions; finally, which symbolic resources do actors employ to legitimise their positions, and according to which mechanisms are they used? The question of whether the media space is a space of deliberation, and if so in what way, in fact turns out to be a question on the vision of the public sphere accepted by communicatively active actors, as well one as on the visibility and invisibility of the discourses in this mediatised reality.

We treated the media themselves here as a communicative space, and therefore a symbolic dimension of the public sphere, examined on two levels – as a space of communication between government and society, and within civil society (a space in which the actors of this society make themselves visible, become empowered, and shape and negotiate among themselves definitions of a situation). This corresponds to the Habermasian understanding of a political public sphere (in which public opinion identifies and thematises problems, so that the political system can then respond to them), and of the civic public sphere, where the actors of civil society become visible to each other (cf. Habermas 1996; Hess 2013). We assumed that this is a space of organised, intentional, yet dispersed communicative actions. These produce images of reality within the limits they construct, to which actors, including the media themselves as collective actors, refer as if to external reality. Following Niklas Luhman (2000), it is important to stress that we are not denying the existence of this reality per se, but merely emphasising that the actors of communicative actions do not refer to it directly, but rather through the constructions of reality they produce. When we speak of the media, it is to this communicative space that we shall be referring, whereas when discussing media institutions as actants,[5] we shall use the term "broadcaster," or, for individual actors, "journalists."

This understanding of a communicative space therefore comprises a set of institutional spaces and discursive rules which as a result form public opinion (Habermas 1996). Yet these spaces go beyond the media, and not only are dispersed, but also have no centre; they might be invisible, self-referential and isolated from each other, though they can also merge and connect together. The problem of semiotic visibility of discourse therefore seems important.[6]

5 We borrow the notion of the "actant" from the tradition of the ideas of Bruno Latour (2007), and refer to non-human acting entities, here institutions working as networks that encompass not only individuals, but also technologies, models and norms of their operation, interactions between the various elements and media institutions.

6 The categories of semiotic visibility of actors in the context of their sensual accessibility and physical presence in the public sphere, as well as publicity, are discussed by Ari Adut (2012). Here we modify his definitions of visibility, relating it to generally sensually and cognitively accessible discourses recognised as sets of communicative actions of communicatively determined groups of actors.

This visibility goes beyond the social niches that these discourses formed. This condition is crucial for confronting them, regardless of whether it is to lead to mutual understanding and create accord for the common good, or to competition and the struggle for hegemony.

The category of visibility was introduced and discussed by Ari Adut (2012) as something of a counterproposal to normative concepts of the public sphere, which linked the notion with civic engagement and the intention to serve the common good. Semiotic visibility therefore refers mostly to individuals appearing in the public sphere, irrespective of their intentions, accessible to the remaining individuals (spectators) as non-engaged others. The fundamental resource in the public sphere is therefore the attention of the audience, which can then be converted into other capitals, for example economic or political. The spectators themselves refer to those who appear using simplifications and typifications (Adut 2012). However, the category of visibility can be related not only to actors, as Adut suggests, but also to discourses themselves. According to this conception, the discourses produced by epistemic communities need a space where they can potentially be accessible to everybody (thus satisfying the condition of a generally accessible public sphere), and their potential for attracting the attention of the audience is an important factor – albeit not the only one – affecting their capacity to create social definitions of situations. At the same time, these discourses themselves undergo typification and simplification reflexively. Adut emphasises the significance of publicity, and notes that the asymmetry that occurs between the audience and the actor does not deprive the former of its significant power understood as the capacity to form groups around that which is watched – by the very fact of sharing participation in the watching (Adut 2012). Yet it is hard to agree with this. The sociology of mass communication has described the characteristics of various types of audiences. The act of participation in an audience alone – be it a diffuse mass audience or one concentrated in one place – is not a sufficient group-forming factor. We can speak of this kind of bond only in reference to the type of public described by Gabriel Tarde (1898). Yet the visibility of discourses in the generally accessible public sphere – here the media space – is significant, as it is here that coalitions of epistemic communities generating the various discourses (as well as the oppositions of these discourses) visible for the wider audience can emerge. Examples might be the support of expert economists for the discourse of the government administration or of environmental scientists for social activists.

The thematic discourses analysed in this book refer to energy policy. This is in turn part of public policies, meaning rationalised and comprehensive actions of society undertaken with the aim of solving socially important problems or attending to society's needs. The discursive approach, which studies argumentative structures in the narratives of members of society, occupies

an important place among the various ways of analysing public policies. The strategies are produced by the aforementioned epistemic communities, which are understood as informal, often dispersed networks generating knowledge and constructing specific definitions, which can in turn exert influence on political actors on a micro scale (O'Riordan, Jordan 1996: 87[7]). These communities are capable of mobilising around specific discourses (Cotton, Rattle, Alstine 2014). And the discourses provide a framework for them, defining who is entitled to speak on behalf of the given community and on what basis (Fisher, Forester 1993). Furthermore, these discourses produce sets of rules that determine which subjects are permissible as well as pointing to the symbolic resources that may be used: knowledge and ignorance, values and anti-values. They are immersed in external contexts, but simultaneously shift these into themselves, defining situations in a certain way and thus transforming the external circumstances into internal elements of the situation (cf. Clarke 2005).

The discursive turn in analysis of public policies, dated to the beginning of the 1990s, entailed facing the dominant way of treating public policies as neutral in terms of the values of technical products (Fisher, Forester 1993). Public policy, it was stressed, is not and cannot be a simple application of scientific methods; without denying the importance of empirical data, a relationship was sought between these data and normative guidelines. The most significant thing became how these relations are constructed in communicative processes. What therefore proved to be the consequence was the opening of the field to qualitative and interpretive analyses, which contrasted with the technocratic and positivistic approach to analysis of public policies (Fischer, Gottweis 2012).

In discursive analyses of public policies from around the turn of the 21st century, an important dimension was language perceived as a medium and tool for organising thinking about selected problems. This is the basis for the proposal for critical analysis of language, reproducing and understanding meanings as support for the deliberation process concerning various actors – politicians, administration, citizens (Lindblom, Cohen 1979; Fischer, Gottweis 2012: 2).

What we therefore find in the discursive approach is an orientation towards civic participation and deliberation – a process during which various actors can strive to create a common solution. We are therefore dealing with

7 Here we depart from the definitions of epistemic communities as communities of professionals proposed by Hass (1992), for example. The criteria he proposes – shared rules, norms and values organising knowledge and providing the foundations for assessing the rationality of social actions and public policies – would seem to also encompass actors who cannot be defined as "professional experts," e.g. activists, members of communities and informal neighbourhood groups – in short, all those engaged in matters of individuals.

a normative ideal of deliberation that derives from the ideas of Habermas and Rawls, and a procedural view of it that opens the field for developing the methodology of participation. What is also stressed is the uncertainty of the times and variability of reality, in which even science and the resultant knowledge do not provide a guarantee of finding optimal solutions, and science itself often becomes a source of uncertainty and risk. As a result, deliberation as a process of collectively agreeing on knowledge, integrating its various resources and accepting its various sources, as well as searching for innovative solutions through rational exchange and evaluation of arguments becomes a way of coping with risk and uncertainty, and with even more clarity emphasises how distinct it is from the expert/governmental model of forming public policies.

In the introduction to their edited volume on this subject, however, Fischer and Gottweis (2012) report that in practice social actors compete with each other, presenting various argumentative strategies and representing diverse, often contradictory interests. Discourse analyses are therefore supposed to make it possible to recognise the mechanism according to which they construct these competing narratives and within which they deal with the problems of risk and uncertainty. The authors argue that a constructivist understanding of discourses and argumentation leads to a deliberative finding of a consensus and public solution of problems (in the process of deliberation) (Fischer, Gottweis 2012). As demonstrated by Hemant Ojha, John Cameron and Chetan Kumar (2012) in their analysis of the order of forest management in Nepal, supplementing the normative approach with an analysis of the deep structures of power and symbolic violence permits a multidimensional understanding of the dynamic of this process. Following Habermas's ideas does not mean that categories of alternative analytical approaches cannot be employed; in the case of the cited work this meant the critical sociology of Pierre Bourdieu (albeit bearing the fundamental differences of these approaches in mind). Deliberation as a normative ideal can therefore be important for opening closed fields and changing the doxa. Introducing new narratives of knowledge to the public sphere (Ojha, Cameron, Kumar 2012) as a result supports the process of change in the area of public policies and increases the flexibility of reacting to turbulent reality.

Despite the obvious references to the ideas of Habermas, the discursive approach proposed by Fischer and Gottweis appears at the operational level to be characterised rather by a different vision of the public sphere. They emphasise the existence within and between discourses of inalienable conflicts, pointing out moreover that a rational discourse does not exhaust argumentative possibilities, and that it is also necessary to take into account irrational discourses, emotional engagement and the resultant differing

means of communication. They also stress the relations of knowledge and power, noting the constructivist nature of knowledge and its diverse types: expert, popular and practical knowledge. To this we should also add ignorance, which most researchers today interpret as being more than a simple opposition to knowledge – as the lack thereof – and its various types and variants (Gross, McGoey 2015).

What is important here, however, is to mobilise resources in the form of values and to construct collective agreement within discursive communities as to their meaning and significance. As Fischer and Gottweis (2012) rightly note, it was agreement on values and ideas that propelled social movements in making significant steps in the development of democracy in Western societies, such as the abolition of slavery, granting the vote to women and focusing attention on environmental issues. Yet they also claim that today the criterion of rationality of a debate is often reduced to economic rationality; although their observation refers to the realities of liberal capitalism in the USA, it also seems to fit the public sphere in Poland. The criterion of economic profitability is extremely common in the analysed discourses.

Since the discursive approach assumes that public communication is strategic in nature, in the research we emphasised the reconstruction of argumentative strategies, which consequently means that the rhetorical aspects of the narrative need to be taken into account. An argument itself is understood as a statement about reality based on a rhetorical device fulfilling a persuasive function (Majone 1989). An analysis must therefore also consider this level of communication.

All this leads us to understand discourse in the context of the relationship of knowledge and power, exerting influence and competition for media visibility. As a result, we adopt the operational procedures of critical discourse analysis (CDA) – on the one hand stressing the significance of rhetoric (as an extremely important aspect of argumentative analysis) and language, and thus using semiotic and linguistic tools, and on the other critical consideration of the discursive practices rooted in the economic, political and cultural contexts that condition the way in which the media work. We shall therefore utilise the discourse theories of Norman Fairclough (2012) and Teun van Dijk (1991) to seek the hidden relations of power, supported by the concepts of Michel Foucault (1990), and following Pierre Bourdieu (1991) in analysing the construction of the power of arguments.

It will be extremely important to analyse the interactions between the actors of the discourse. The optimum solution, which combines the interactive approach with critical reconstruction of the discursive structures of knowledge, power, human and non-human components, appears to be provided by the situational analysis of Adele Clarke (2005), which treats external contexts as internal components of the situation created in the progress of

the discourse. This therefore makes it possible to analyse the contexts significant in the tradition of CDA (social, historical, etc.) as internal elements in discursive maps, while simultaneously observing actors and their actions in various configurations. This method is based on discerning discourses from the point of view of their capacity "to map the things that can be thought, said and done in many aspects of life" (Salskov-Iversen, Krause Hansen 2008: 409). All this was the inspiration for creating procedures for the research at the stage of analysis of media sources.

The analyses also took account of the approaches to discourse analysis at the opposite end of the spectrum: the normative premises of Habermas's conception (cf. Czyżewski 2013), and especially those referring to self-description of discursive communities. This led to questions on the rhetorical power of their impact, and the vision of the public sphere adopted by its visible actors. At present, the rhetoric of deliberation and participation (not necessarily reflected in procedures actually in place) that political actors often take up determines the guidelines for defining the public sphere, and these conceptions frequently also become a component of the self-descriptions of the political systems of contemporary democracies. Yet the calls for greater inclusiveness in the public sphere, exchange of arguments and arriving at a consensus that are viewed as autotelic values can themselves become tools of symbolic violence. Marek Czyżewski (2013) observes that they can be an element of the rhetoric game between competing actors who legitimise their discourses by invoking this ideal of deliberation, while also showing that alternative or rival discourses do not satisfy these criteria. They are thus less civic and non-public. Also interesting is the question of how much this deliberative ideal becomes an element of the self-description of the media space, legitimising it as a modern agora (or forum) – a space of inclusion of social actors and an area in which the mechanisms of translatability of perspectives operate. Therefore, if we take the metaphor of media as a system of communication (Luhmann 2000), we experience two levels here – that of self-description shaping a system's identity, and that of actual operations (cf. Wagner 2010). The question we shall try to answer is therefore the following: in what way does the media space favour striving for a normative ideal of deliberation and realising deliberative democracy? Does it satisfy the demands of inclusiveness, mapping diverse discourses, stimulating their dialogical nature and promoting the pursuit of agreement, or does it rather correspond to a critical vision of the public sphere as an agonistic space in which competing interests are reflected in alternative discourses struggling for hegemony in the public sphere? It remains a separate question whether even a pluralistic – meaning that various discourses are visible – public sphere generates questions that receive a real answer in the form of influence on formation of public policies – here the state's energy policy. In other

words: are the problems defined by these discourses taken into account in the processes of designing and/or implementing public policies? Discourse analyses in other countries show that this is not necessarily the case (Cotton, Rattle, Alstine 2014).

In the case of discourses focused on energy issues in Poland, one can notice references to the ideas of dialogue and deliberation by the representatives of marginalised discourses – in particular the environmental one, which makes protection of nature the main value and criterion of evaluating actions undertaken within public policies. They question the dominant discourses as non-civic, at the same time fighting for acknowledgement of their own presence in the mediatised public sphere. A frequent response to this in the media space is other mechanisms of exclusion, for example referring to deprecation of competing ideas in the following ways: questioning their rationality (referring to the logical order, and criteria of economic assessment of costs and profits), labelling the proposed solutions as naive and utopian (invoking practical reason), stressing the emotional nature of statements, in contrast to the sober expert verdicts ("clinical reason"), and finally ignoring certain actors and limiting their access to the media space (e.g. according to the rule of representativeness, which favours the representatives of the largest groups in access to the media). With all this in mind, we operationalise the "visibility" of discourses through the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion of actors and evaluating arguments (e.g. through claims of importance or assessment of rationality).

The consequence of adopting these theoretical premises is that we conceptualise the media space as a public sphere in which, within the existing discourses,[8] knowledge and ignorance as well as values and norms are constructed, while specific individual and collective actors are defined as visible (and invisible), the status of the situation is characterised and its definitions negotiated, and the equally important areas of what is concealed are formed. This in turn determined the methodology that was used and the way in which the research was organised, as laid out in the next chapter.

8 The concept of discourse is defined in diverse ways by various theoretical currents, and often used without precise definition. With this in mind, we accept an operational definition of discourse as a collection of texts thematically focused around specific issues (cf. Czyżewski 1997) within a given timeframe. At the same time, we do not lose sight of the understanding of discourse as acting with the aid of words in a specific social and cultural context, accompanied by awareness of the forms of use of language (formal structure) and its cognitive component within a system of concepts and values (van Dijk 1997). We also assume that textual strategies will be realised in the analysed discourses (Duszak 1998).

Situational analysis as a way of mapping the discursive media space

Our analyses of the press discourse – and media discourse in the final stage – encompassed quantitative analyses allowing us to categorise the elements of the discourse, analyses of vocabulary (frequency lists) and links between concepts (cluster analyses) as well as fundamental qualitative analyses designed to describe the various discourses within a framework set by the above research questions. Owing to the theoretical tensions within discourse theory (cf. Czyżewski 2013; Jabłońska 2012) and the numerous conceptual categories identified during the quantitative stages, it proved to be a challenge to find an analysis track that would make it possible to deal with the chaos, contradictions and "disorder" of the research material, while at the same time discerning the subtle relations between key categories and the dynamic of changes within the discourses. These needs were met by the three-stage working method proposed by the situational analysis – drawing up situational maps, maps of worlds/arenas and positional maps (Clarke 2005) (as well as its interactive nature and inspiration from cartographic methods, in keeping with the accepted notion of the media "space"). In spite of certain theoretical weaknesses (cf. Mathar 2008; Kacperczyk 2007) and limitations caused by the researcher's interpretive subjectivism (hence the suggestion of constant awareness of one's own input to the analysed material), this method permitted creative and systemic work with the material, as well as allowing the researchers to be restrained in making authoritative claims and analytically ready to "be surprised" by their observations until the end of the project. This awareness of the relativity of the analysed discourses is especially valuable in response to the charges sometimes levelled at researchers who lose sight of this epistemological requirement, which is fundamental to the discursive approach (cf. Salskov-Iversen, Krause Hansen 2008; Czyżewski 2013).

By combining inspirations from CDA and situational analysis, we were faced with the challenge of specifying the category of context. According to van Dijk, the context is a set of external circumstances influencing the way in which we interpret contents. In a situational analysis, the context as an internalised construct of the discourse itself is significant inasmuch as it has been introduced into the field called the situation. As for the situation itself, which is left as a concept that is undefined but rooted in specific theoretical traditions (cf. Kacperczyk 2007), we understand it as a brief moment when various actors meet and negotiate, confront meanings, but also reproduce and process them (cf. Mathar 2008). All resources, including knowledge and ignorance, are therefore open in nature, defined by somebody and for some-

body in a given moment. Tom Mathar (2008), following the ideas of Donna Haraway, underlines the situational meaning of knowledge as produced by various, not only expert groups, and utilised and reproduced by actors from various networks. In a similar, situational way, within the discourse values, symbols, and metaphors are processed, but also the actors and actants themselves, the interpretations of their actions, the framework of social practices etc. This approach refers strongly to the classical understanding of the definition of a situation as an interactive and subjective way of defining reality by the members of a given cultural group (Thomas, Znaniecki 1996; Hałas 1991). It assumes that there are multiple social worlds and demonstrates their interaction – the dynamic of variable actions of actors occupying various positions and constructing different definitions of that to which they refer.

A separate paragraph is needed for the power–knowledge relationship, which plays a very important role in energy issues. In the Habermasian view, power is redistributed in a process of uninterrupted communication by the primacy of the better argument. This important connection creating normative foundations for the concept of deliberation must therefore become the starting point for a project seeking to diagnose the media space as an area of deliberation. In media communication, though, apart from the level of normative self-description of the media, it is hard to find an uninterrupted communication situation. Therefore, accepting the key category of argument, we operationalise power in two dimensions: structural, employing Foucault's ideas; and cultural, following Bourdieu's conception of power in communication. We treat structural power as permeating all relations, dynamically manifested in discourse and characterising all practices of its actors. Power in communication is therefore manifested by admitting somebody (others – an actor or discourse) to the process of communication (or excluding somebody from this process) and/or by recognising or challenging this input to the dialogue. This brings us to the process of producing and regulating discourses of truth (Foucault 1990). We therefore see that also significant is internal power understood as the capacity of argument for emerging as the better one in the discourse – the key question is "Which arguments win in practice?" (Pellizioni 2001). The cultural capital owned by specific groups defines the criteria for appraising an argument. The dominant discourses will therefore determine the knowledge that is acknowledged, repelling (or not admitting) competing narratives. We shall understand knowledge itself as theoretical knowledge founded in science and legitimised by its institutional authority (produced at universities and research centres and cited by scientists). This is contrasted with the categories of techne – technical, practical knowledge – and doxa, meaning knowledge understood in terms of social consciousness, beliefs and opinions (cf. Ziółkowski 2002), often within a given field treated as a set of assumptions accepted "in themselves," unquestioned and regarded as a certainty (Bourdieu 2010). The media have the power

to exhibit and disseminate arguments, and this can lead to their reproduction in non-media discourses (as in certain unreflexive responses given in surveys; cf. Wagner 2010), or to a false consensus (excessive and unauthorised emphasis of the agreement and equality of resources of actors participating in a discourse) (Bohman 1996). The way in which a deliberation process (resulting from participation) is designed, conducted, but also presented can also result in forming and imposing practices in a similar fashion to expert decisions (Stirling 2005). We define an argument here as a complex structure combining specific knowledge and information, a subjective judgement and a certain rhetorical device (Majone 1989). Arguments are confronted, exchanged and developed, which means that the argumentation itself develops. We assume that this also occurs in the media space.

Our search for the mechanisms of the "power of an argument" by using the symbolic resources available in specific fields of social action leads us to make use of Bourdieu's theory emphasising the importance of cultural factors. If we treat deliberation as a way of searching for new solutions, including those which were initially inaccessible to the actors joining the debate and which can come from outside of the field of knowledge regarded as the valid one, deliberation can be seen as a mechanism that opens a closed field of dogmatic knowledge – doxa (cf. Ojha et al. 2012).

The type of work that results from a situational analysis allows us to make use of these diverse sources. The cartographic metaphor dovetails with our perception of media discourse as above all a communicative space, and subsequently as actants defining themselves in this space. Just as a map is a conventional interpretation of external space (Luhmann 2000[9]), discursive maps are a dual interpretation, as they represent the subjective interpretation of the researcher, who draws conclusions on the interpretation made by actors. This means that we can treat the key categories of knowledge very flexibly, taking into account the construction of areas of ignorance (in its numerous types) and uncertainty, which sometimes takes the form of risk defined in such various ways. The main section will comprise a sociologically orientated discourse analysis emphasising dynamics and interactivity (Pawliszak, Rancew-Sikora 2012) – important categories when we construe deliberation as a process. A situational analysis assumes that, as Anna Kacperczyk writes in reference to Clarke's work, the study "should conduct a detailed description, presentation and explanation of the individual, collective, organisational institutional, temporal, geographical, material, discursive, cultural, symbolic, visual and historical aspects of a situation" (Kacperczyk 2007: 5). This means that we can not only reconstruct subjective visions of the problems

9 Our use of Luhmann's metaphor is mostly confined to the constructivist dimension of his ideas, and does not apply his systemic theory of media.

and solutions of actors defined and legitimised by individual discourse, but also consider the human and non-human factors of the situation. Owing to the temporal, variable and complex nature of the situation, its conception appears ideal for studying media representations, as this method allows us to go beyond the level of representations and consider the significance of formal language structures and their dynamic variability (see Figure 1).

The maps drawn up to support the researcher's subjective interpretation are meant not for construction of models based on analytical simplifications, but to reveal the complexity of the situation, and all its various elements, in order to then identify and explain both the models reconstructed and the process of change. In keeping with the research procedure recommended by Clarke, the analysis incorporated the following dimensions:

1) human, nonhuman, and discursive elements of the situation
2) social worlds and arenas
3) the positions taken by subjects in discourses or controversial discussions.

1) The dimension of the human, nonhuman (material) and discursive elements of the situation was drawn up during the quantitative analysis. Such maps were sketched separately for each title in this study. We also drew up integrated maps for the entire analysed material. These became the basis for an in-depth, qualitative discourse analysis which aimed to "understand the complexity and heterogeneity of individual and collective situations, discourses and interpretations of the situation" (Kacperczyk 2007: 10). Once prepared and regulated, the maps become the foundation of a relational analysis – exploring the links between the various categories and elements.

2) The analysis of social worlds and arenas takes as its unit of analysis the "social world" understood as subjects of discourse, the community producing meanings and taking certain collective actions. This step involved drawing up maps to test the collective engagement of actors and to examine the connections between them and the areas of the actions carried out.

3) The final phase of the research is production of positional maps serving to illustrate the possible positions articulated in the discourse. Importantly, these are not necessarily attributed to a given actor – an individual, group or institution – but rather reflect argumentative strategies. This approach makes it possible to treat all strategies – including rarer and even marginal ones – as equally important for understanding the complexity of a situation. The central categories here are not just the articulated topics, but also the areas which are not discussed.

Figure 1 summarises these reflections illustrating the guidelines adopted for the analysis, which in the final stage of the research considers the discourse described as "current," yet at the same time referring to the results of the analyses carried out in the previous stages.

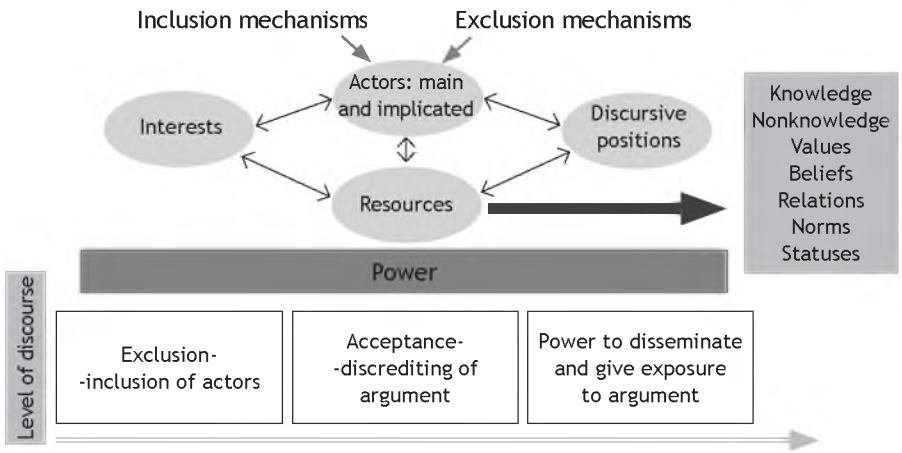

Figure 1. Outline of discourse analysis in individual thematic topics
Source: own elaboration.

In accordance with the principles of CDA, the research incorporated analysis of the level of the linguistic organisation of the material. Three dimensions were taken into account: semantic (focusing on the construction of arguments; the component of knowledge and of subjective judgement); formal (analysing the figurativeness of the language, with particular consideration for the style of the statement and the modality as a transmitted status created in the statement of reality, i.e. presenting reality as desired, objectively existing or supposed to exist in a given time); and finally that of the linguistic dynamic (including the dimension of dialogicality and intertextuality in the accepted understanding (see Chapter 2: Research Organisation).

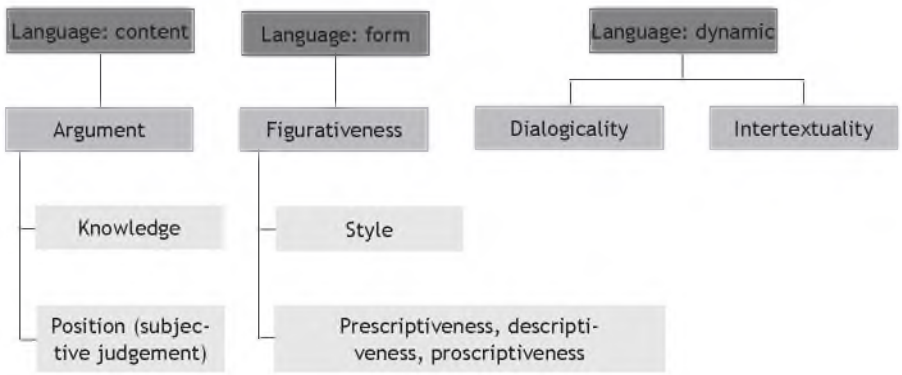

Figure 2. Overview of sociolinguistic analyses
Source: own elaboration.

Conclusion

The theoretical and methodological context outlined in this chapter defines the fundamental research problem explored in this book. This is the role and meaning of media discourses for a wide-ranging social debate on topics that are important for this society. Energy here is an example, a kind of case study that illustrates the specific mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion of actors and arguments, and thus constructing that which becomes visible in the public sphere and might be a reference point for both institutional and group or individual decisions and actions. In this sense, media discourses are an important dimension of social practices whose consequences measurably determine the future.

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